

2. **Why is each point on Earth unique?** Every place in the world has a unique location or position on Earth's surface. Geographers also identify regions as areas distinguished by distinctive combinations of cultural as well as economic and environmental features. The distributions of features help us to understand why every place and every region is unique.

3. **Why are different places similar?** Geographers work at all scales, from local to global. The global scale is increasingly important because few places in the contemporary world are totally isolated. Because places are connected to each other, they display similarities. Geographers study the interactions of groups of people and human activities across space, and they identify processes by which people and ideas diffuse from one location to another over time.

CASE STUDY REVISITED

The Geography of a Big Mac Attack

Each chapter in this textbook concludes by reviewing the opening case study in light of the issues raised in the chapter. This chapter presented five basic concepts—space, place, region, scale, and connections. The opening case study presented a typical everyday geographic concern—a search for a restaurant—to which these five concepts can be applied.

Geography is fundamentally concerned with the organization of space. McDonald's restaurants are not distributed randomly across the landscape; rather, each restaurant has a unique location that can be depicted on a map. Geographers use the map to describe where these establishments are found and explain why they are so arranged. Because “where” and “why” are the questions most fundamental to geographic inquiry, they are used to organize the material presented within all of the other chapters in this book.

Geographers observe from a map that McDonald's restaurants cluster in some regions, whereas other regions have few. A world map of McDonald's restaurants helps us to understand global-scale patterns of investment by a major international corporation. Most McDonald's are located in countries where average incomes are high enough to buy the products. On the other hand, a world map of McDonald's doesn't help a hungry American driving on an interstate highway. The motorist needs a local-scale map showing the location of McDonald's in relation to specific highway exit ramps. As McDonald's have diffused from the United States to other regions of the world, each McDonald's is connected to all other McDonald's by a communications network through which uniform standards and practices are set.



Franchised restaurants tend to cluster near each other.

In subsequent chapters, these five basic concepts will be applied to elements of human geography. Chapters 2 and 3 examine where humans are clustered in the world, why the number of people has increased in some places, and why people have moved to certain places. The focus in Chapters 4 through 8 will be on where important cultural traits, including popular and folk customs, language, religion, ethnicity, and political institutions, are distributed. In these chapters, explanations are also given as to why these cultural features are so distributed and why these distributions can lead to conflict. Described in Chapters 9 through 14 are where different economic activities are found around the world, why people earn a living in different ways in different regions of the world, and why people increasingly earn a living by residing in urban areas.

KEY TERMS

Agricultural density (p. 33)
Arithmetic density (p. 33)
Base line (p. 10)
Cartography (p. 6)
Concentration (p. 33)
Connections (p. 5)
Contagious diffusion (p. 38)
Cultural ecology (p. 25)
Cultural landscape (p. 20)
Culture (p. 23)

Density (p. 33)
Diffusion (p. 37)
Distance decay (p. 37)
Distribution (p. 33)
Environmental determinism (p. 25)
Expansion diffusion (p. 37)
Formal region (p. 21)
Functional region (p. 21)
Geographic information system (GIS) (p. 12)

Global Positioning System (GPS) (p. 14)
Globalization (p. 30)
Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) (p. 19)
Hearth (p. 37)
Hierarchical diffusion (p. 37)
International Date Line (p. 20)
Land Ordinance of 1785 (p. 10)
Latitude (p. 17)
Location (p. 14)

Longitude (p. 17)	Prime meridian (p. 17)	Site (p. 16)
Map (p. 5)	Principal meridian (p. 10)	Situation (p. 16)
Mental map (p. 22)	Projection (p. 9)	Space (p. 5)
Meridian (p. 17)	Region (p. 5)	Space-time compression (p. 35)
Parallel (p. 17)	Regional studies (p. 20)	Stimulus diffusion (p. 39)
Pattern (p. 34)	Relocation diffusion (p. 37)	Toponym (p. 14)
Physiological density (p. 33)	Remote sensing (p. 12)	Township (p. 10)
Place (p. 5)	Resource (p. 25)	Transnational corporation (p. 31)
Polder (p. 28)	Scale (p. 5)	Uneven development (p. 39)
Possibilism (p. 25)	Sections (p. 11)	Vernacular region (p. 22)

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY

1. Cartography is not simply a technical exercise in penmanship and coloring, nor are decisions confined to scale and projection. Mapping is a politically sensitive undertaking. Look at how maps in this book distinguish between the territories of Israel and its neighbors, the locations of borders in South Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, and northwest Africa. Are there other logical ways to draw boundaries and distinguish among territories in these regions? What might they be?
2. Imagine that a transportation device (perhaps the one in *Star Trek* or *Harry Potter*) would enable all humans to travel instantaneously to any location on Earth's surface. What would be the impact of that invention on the distribution of peoples and activities across Earth?
3. When earthquakes, hurricanes, or other environmental disasters strike, humans tend to "blame" nature and see themselves as innocent victims of a harsh and cruel nature. To what extent do environmental hazards stem from unpredictable nature, and to what extent do they originate from human actions? Should victims blame nature, other humans, or themselves for the disaster? Why?
4. The construction of dams is a particularly prominent example of human-environment interaction in regions throughout the world. Turkey is building the Ataturk Dam on the Euphrates River, a move opposed by Syria and Iraq, the two downstream countries. Egypt, which operates the Aswan Dam on the Nile River, has blocked loans to Ethiopia that could be used to divert the source of the Nile. Some Russians oppose construction of the Gorskaya Dam in the Gulf of Finland near St. Petersburg. Similarly, the Balbina Dam on the Uatuma River, a tributary of the Amazon, has generated considerable opposition in Brazil. Why do governments push the construction of dams so forcefully, and why do others oppose their construction so passionately?
5. Geographic concepts are supposed to help explain contemporary issues. Are there any stories in your newspaper to which geographic concepts can be applied to help understand the issues? Discuss.

FURTHER READINGS

- Alderman, Derek H. "Street Names and the Scaling of Memory: The Politics of Commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr. Within the African American Community." *Area* 35 (2003): 163-73.
- Allen, John, Doreen B. Massey, Allan Cochrane, and Julie Charlesworth. *Rethinking the Region*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Anderson, Kay, Mona Domosh, Steve Pile, and Nigel Thrift, eds. *Handbook of Cultural Geography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003.
- Arendt, Randall. *Designing Open Space Subdivisions*. Media, PA: Natural Lands Trust, 1994.
- Ayers, Edward L., Patricia Nelson Limerick, Stephen Nussbaum, and Peter S. Onuf. *All over the Map: Rethinking American Regions*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Benko, Georges, and Ulf Strohmayer, eds. *Human Geography: A History for the 21st Century*. London and New York: Arnold, 2004.
- Blunt, Alison, Pyrs Gruffudd, Jon May, Miles Ogborn, and David Pinder, eds. *Cultural Geography in Practice*. London: Arnold, 2003.
- Bonnett, Alastair. "Geography as the World Discipline: Connecting Popular and Academic Geographical Imaginations." *Area* 35 (2003): 55-63.
- Brown, Lawrence A. *Innovation Diffusion: A New Perspective*. London: Methuen, 1981.
- Brunn, Stanley D. "Sunbelt USA." *Focus* 36 (1986): 34-35.
- Claval, Paul. "The Region as a Geographical, Economic and Cultural Concept." *International Social Science Journal* 39 (1987): 159-72.
- Cloke, Paul, Philip Crang, and Mark Goodwin, eds. *Envisioning Human Geographies*. London and New York: Arnold, 2004.
- Constandse, A. K. *Planning and Creation of an Environment*. Lelystad, Netherlands: Rijksdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders, 1976.
- Cresswell, Tim. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.
- Cutter, Susan L., Reginald Golledge, and William L. Graf. "The Big Questions in Geography." *Professional Geographer* 54 (2002): 235-55.